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sensitiveness to such minority despotism as still lingers it is not likely that the American people as a whole will have the disposition to hearken to apostles of a new minority rule of any sort whatever—least of all when the new

influence needs to be backed by force. And if any man or body of men has a great new truth to give us the one best way to get it over to us is by full, thoughtful, and good-humored explanation and discussion.

A Bulwark for Civilization

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IF the work of the Peace Conference could suddenly be blotted out, if the world could be placed all at once where it would have been had there been no Peace Conference, many of those who are heard only in denunciation of its work or in querulous acceptance of it would suddenly discover that the greatest thing in world history had disappeared. It would be like the removal of a safeguard against immediate woes, in which we have believed even while we condemned. The great treaty is here—and it will have to be accepted. To have it abolished would leave mankind gasping in utter confusion. It would be a moral conflagration burning out the heart of the new city of hope, an earthquake shaking down the great new landmark of progress, an operation cutting off the vital member of a new world organism.

Some radicals are opposed to the treaty. They object because of certain failures in it to secure self-determination of peoples, or because it is over severe on the people of Germany, or because it has not quite ended imperialism. They object to it because it is imperfect from their various viewpoints. They say it ought not to be ratified because it does not make the world safe either for democracy or for peace. In looking at things which it does not do, or which it fails to do, they lose sight of what it does.

What is the one thing of surpassing importance which the treaty does? It sets up a mechanism, seemingly powerful, for preserving the peace of the world, and for restoring it; a peace under which democratic movements may go forward toward success. Of course it does not make the world forever safe for democracy. Nothing can do that except an enlightened and eternal vigilance in every nation and in every age. The moment any people reaches the point where it feels that it does not need to fight for democracy, that moment its democ-

racy is in danger, no matter what its institutions may be. Neither does the treaty make the world safe for peace. Nothing can do that. But the absence of some such collective covenant seems to make war certain just as soon as the exhausted nations have caught their breaths. The treaty is the best effort that the wearied, exhausted, maddened peoples of the world are now capable of making for the preservation of peace. The attempt has been made; it has permanent peace as its object; no second effort is possible; the choice is either this or chaos; here is the result; take it or leave it.

For five years one has often been in doubt as to whether or not Caucasian civilization has not been engrossed in a struggle that the historian of a future age may be justified in calling the suicide of a civilization. Even if the convulsion stops where it is, there is no assurance that our culture will ever recover. No great era was ever conscious of the passing of its zenith, and torn as we are, wounded as we are, degraded as we are by this war, we may be turning our faces toward the setting sun of our civilization, to a time when all our great achievements, all our new knowledge shall have passed away with our tremendous buildings, none of which can possibly last as long as the Pyramids and the Sphinx have endured. All the glories of the present age may pass away as completely as did those of past ages, the splendors of which we are continually rediscovering, as the ruins give up traces here and there of their dead knowledge—traces more and more significant, and more and more indicative of the fact that the past has swallowed up civilizations surprisingly near to an equality with ours in intellectual development and collective as well as individual achievement, and perhaps in all these regards superior; and

which had the quality of endurance to an extent far beyond anything of which our institutions have showed themselves capable. Whether or not this civilization recovers depends upon the success of the great treaty—or, if the devastation of everything precious goes on in other wars, upon the renewal of such efforts in the ages in which we shall lapse from one stage of decay to another as did ancient Rome.

The great task that was undertaken under the treaty is the erection of a bulwark against war. This bulwark may not hold; but it is the only hope in sight. When the world war is renewed, if it ever is, it will surpass in horror the worst phases of the conflict that we hope is closing, as far as this war outstripped in these respects the wars of the past. When the armistice was signed the war was fast passing into a phase of unimaginable terror. Chemical warfare began in this war, but it ended just as the new processes of destruction had developed a poison gas a single drop of which on the skin of its victim would have been as surely fatal as a bullet through the heart. No gas mask could stop this contact spray for the destruction of human insects; for it did not need to reach the lungs. Aerial bombs had been perfected to rival, without pilots, the work of the airship. Armed with wings these dreadful inventions, guided by electricity, could be sent for a hundred miles and made to drop and explode, and converting their machinery into shrapnel, drench with poison gas, blast, or tear down anything destructible at any determined point. Explosives more powerful than had ever been known were in process of manufacture. America was preparing for her foes the culminating horrors of war. Let the world war be renewed, and there can be no doubt that new explosives, in larger quantities than have ever been launched in projectiles, will fly by their own power with their own wings for hundreds and probably thousands of miles to undo in an instant what man has taken ages to do; London will be annihilated from Berlin or Vienna, or New York and Philadelphia from any point in Europe. There is no reason to doubt the ability of a foe ultimately to launch destruction against America from Asia or the islands of either ocean. It involves a far shorter step toward the acme of success in chemical and electrical warfare than we have taken since the

United States entered the war against the Central Powers. And back of chemical and electrical warfare lie the hitherto forbidden grounds of other sciences. We may next hear of bacterial warfare.

There is no such thing longer as isolation. Already airships have crossed the ocean; and what one can do, a host can do. We are members one of another. The world is integrated. Once it was either unorganized, or of so low a type in organization that, like some low animal forms, a limb might be lopped off without inconvenience to, and outside the consciousness of, the loose collection of organs called the individual. That time is past. It has been past for a hundred years now, at least; but the failure to realize this is the cause of the confusion of thought of those who speak of the treaty in terms of blame for what it is not, and forget what it is. It is the only barrier between the world and the destruction of everything in it which we of the Western World hold precious.

Of course it is imperfect. It was created mainly by men who did not know what they were doing, or who were not permitted to do what they would have desired to do, or who were carried along by the world impulse to do what they did not believe in, or who did grudgingly what they knew had to be done, but whose old-world notions made them rebel at the task. Mainly the Peace Conference has been in the hands of typical Foreign Office bureaucrats, solicitous to multiply jobs, avid for empire, ready to saddle their respective countries with any territory or responsibility no matter how dangerous. As one has said, "Put a plugged nickel on the table of the Peace Conference, and they'll jump at it." That the treaty is imperfect we must attribute to the imperfections of man, and the agony of spirit in which the work was done. That it is as good as it is will one day be regarded as a miracle. It sets up the first great integrating force ever organized in world affairs. It has better than an even chance to end war for a generation; and when the art of doing this is once learned it will be practiced. The treaty has therefore a chance, more or less great, of ending war forever. It is perhaps the only agency by which Caucasian civilization can save itself.